

November 6, 1964

Mr. Nigel Calder, Editor
New Scientist
Cromwell House, Fulwood Place
High Holborn
London, W. C. 1, England

Dear Nigel:

I have been thinking about your proposal in your letter of October 8 since receiving it, and find the idea very appealing. However, the trouble is, of course, where to get the time and concentration to do this kind of task which I would regard as a very important function and fully worthy of any time that I could find for it. In the circumstances, I would like to think that you are leaving me with a blank check, but it would be very rash of me to make any concrete promises until I can actually see the possibility of performance. So I will certainly keep it in mind and when an appropriate impulse or opportunity arises, will do what I can to implement joining in the enterprise of a series of essays on a regular basis. I would be most interested in hearing of any further details of your plans as they develop. I would also like to establish, without expecting any possible difficulty about it, that you would favor the following:

Since most of my own thinking is reactive ^{to the} ~~(this~~ this as an anagram of creative) I expect my usual point of departure would be some specific assertion, quotation, perhaps a book or other essay, whose implications I felt needed either correction or extrapolation. In the long run, if I did proceed with such an enterprise, I would hope to collect a series of essays for publication separately, and I trust that such an aim would not conflict with any other ancillary objectives that you might have.

If you have not already thought of it I would urge you to include Professor Arne Tiselius on your list of correspondents.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

P.S. One of your associates had written me a while ago to ask about your coverage of molecular biology and in particular about some work that I must have talked to you about when I saw you two years ago. As to the latter, I am enclosing a reprint of a paper which just appeared in the Journal of Molecular Biology. Perhaps immodestly, I would tell you that this is probably a more significant contribution than the rather bland title might lead you to suggest, since it represents a rather effective separation of DNA molecules carrying different genetic specificities from the total extract of the

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bacterial culture. Of course this type of work is very deeply embedded into the very large volume of current tradition in this field, and since the work was first done (and I must say we tend to be rather slow about getting around to publish many of our results) there have been one or two other contributions of similar import. The last paragraph of the reprint does summarize what its main effect is. I am afraid I could not contemplate sending popular writing on a technical subject so close to my own interests, which I find the hardest of all to do. Since Crick's group is so outstanding in this field I would think they would be your most convenient general source of rapport with what is going on in molecular biology. In London I should think that you already were in close touch with Bill Hayes and Bruce Stocker, among others.

P.P.S. This may be a blunt way to put it, but I wonder if you would be interested in picking up the enclosed writings which appeared originally in our house organ of rather limited circulation. I am sure I could arrange the necessary approvals from the editors if this were of any interest to you. I should clarify that the timing of U.S. missions intended to land on Mars is still under very serious study, and Multivator has no commitment to be carried on any specific mission. There was no effort to incorporate landing devices on the current Mariner series which have been intended entirely as flybys for preliminary reconnaissance of the planet.